

ORIGINAL ARTICLES

Scientific and General

CALIFORNIA STATE DEPARTMENT OF
PUBLIC HEALTH: ITS ADMINISTRA-
TIVE ORGANIZATION*

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THE California State Department of Public Health, which is the second oldest in the nation, was established on April 15, 1870, only 20 years after the formation of the State government.

The first State Board of Health consisted of seven physicians appointed by the Governor and was primarily an advisory and informational body with exceedingly limited powers. In 1905 the Legislature expanded these powers to provide for bureau organization. From time to time additional bureaus and divisions were established under the supervision of the board.

The State Board of Health now consists of eight members: seven physicians, including the director of the department, and one dentist. Members are appointed by the Governor for four-year terms, so staggered that there are always some experienced members to give continuity to policy. The board functions as a policy-making, regulatory, judicial, and licensing body.

The State Director of Public Health is the executive officer of the board and the administrative head of the department. It is his duty to administer the laws and regulations of the board pertaining to public health, to observe sanitary and public health conditions throughout the State, and to take all necessary precautions to protect the State in its sanitary and public health relations with other states and countries.

The legal duties of the Department of Public Health include: Examination into the causes of communicable disease in man and domestic animals; investigation of the sources of morbidity and mortality and the effects of localities, employments, conditions and circumstances on the public health; licensing of hospitals coming under the Hospital Act of 1945; detection and prevention of adulteration of food and drugs; examination for and the prevention of pollution of sources of public water and ice supplies; and preparation and distribution at cost of antitoxins, vaccine, and other approved biologic products for the control or prevention of communicable disease. The department may advise all local health authorities, and, when in its judgment the public health is menaced, it shall control and regulate their action.

The State department has as one of its principal functions the encouragement and stimulation of local health departments capable of meeting the public health needs of the areas which they serve. Direct public health service to the people of California is given mainly by local public health departments, the State department giving only such direct service as cannot be provided locally. The chief way in which the department works toward the accomplishment of adequate local health departments is through providing the following services:

1. Leadership in assisting communities to recognize their public health needs;
2. Financial aid in the establishment and strengthening of local health services, including the provision of staff and other resources;

3. Provision of educational opportunities for staffs of local health departments;

4. Establishment of standards of service and personnel; and

5. Coördination of the total public health program within the State and of local, State, and Federal programs.

In January, 1945, the administrative structure of the Department was reorganized by the Director with the approval of the Governor. The activities of the Department are now conducted by five Divisions with supervision over fourteen Bureaus.

DIVISION OF ADMINISTRATION

The Division of Administration includes three bureaus: Business Management, Records and Statistics, and Health Education.

The Bureau of Business Management is responsible for fiscal and personnel control, accounting, and office management.

The Bureau of Records and Statistics is now responsible for registration and analysis of births, deaths, and marriages. It is planned that the bureau will be responsible for the recording and analysis not only of vital statistics but also of morbidity and service records.

The Bureau of Health Education conducts a State-wide program of education of the public on health problems and fosters local community organization for the solution of public health problems through education. Working with the State Department of Education and local health and school departments, it also seeks to improve the quality of school health services and instruction.

DIVISION OF PREVENTIVE MEDICAL SERVICE

The Division of Preventive Medical Service includes six bureaus.

The Bureau of Maternal and Child Health conducts activities for the improvement of the health of mothers and children, such as conferences and clinics in areas where such services are not supplied locally; enforces board regulations pertaining to institutions receiving maternity cases; conducts the State program for the aid of crippled children; administers the emergency maternal and infant care program which provides medical and hospital care for the wives and infants of servicemen; and registers school audiometrists.

The Bureau of Tuberculosis coördinates the Statewide program for the prevention and treatment of tuberculosis. Its chief services are the establishment and maintenance of high standards in sanatoria throughout the State, the administration of the State subsidy law, the conduct of x-ray surveys, and the development of effective case finding services.

The Bureau of Venereal Diseases administers the venereal disease control program which includes considerable Federal and State financial assistance to local health departments conducting venereal disease case-finding programs and free public clinics and laboratories. It administers the laws requiring premarital and prenatal examinations for syphilis.

California law requires the reporting of 52 different communicable diseases to the local health officer who in turn must report all such cases to the State Department of Public Health. The Bureau of Acute Communicable Diseases records the number of cases of each reportable disease, the total number of deaths caused by the disease, the age and racial distribution, the localities in which the disease occurred, and other information of this kind. From these records, trends of diseases are determined which are useful to the State and local authorities in planning their programs for the improvement of the pub-

* An official statement appearing in "California's Health," official bulletin of the California State Department of Public Health.

lic health and to control or prevent epidemics. Through immediate knowledge of an outbreak of a disease, the bureau is enabled to take action to prevent spread, and, in some cases, to remove the cause.

The Bureau of Public Health Nursing is responsible for the development and maintenance of high standards in public health nursing throughout the State. To accomplish this objective, the bureau assists local health departments and other agencies to obtain qualified public health nurses; offers advisory service to public health nurses and local health agencies; and maintains an educational program open to all public health nurses in the State.

The Bureau of Adult Health is responsible for programs for the protection of the health of industrial workers from both occupational and general health hazards. It assists local health departments to develop their programs and services in industrial health and provides direct services (medical, engineering, and nursing consultations and studies) to individual industries. The bureau maintains a laboratory for the analysis of samples of materials used in industrial processes which may be hazardous to health.

DIVISION OF ENVIRONMENTAL SANITATION

The Division of Environmental Sanitation includes two bureaus, the Bureau of Sanitary Engineering and the Bureau of Food and Drugs.

Community water supply and sewage disposal in California are regulated through permits issued by the State Department of Public Health. In each case, action is based on investigations and reports made by the Bureau of Sanitary Engineering.

In order to reduce to a minimum the danger of water and insect-borne disease, the bureau maintains supervision of water supplies; sewage disposal systems; industrial waste disposal; beach, stream, and watershed pollution; mosquito control; and the handling of shell-fish. The work, which is primarily investigative, advisory, and promotional, is conducted through and with local health, water, and sewer departments. The bureau assists local authorities to safeguard the general sanitation of communities in emergency situations such as serious floods, earthquakes, fires, or other catastrophes.

A Section on Sanitary Inspections makes surveys of sanitary conditions, particularly related to the disposal of garbage and of sewage in areas where there are no community sewage disposal systems. This section conducts surveys throughout the State to ascertain the presence of disease in rodents, particularly plague, and assists local health officers in preventing the spread of rabies.

The Bureau of Food and Drugs is charged under California law with the responsibility for the detection and prevention of adulteration and mislabeling of foods and drugs produced within the State. The bureau coöperates with the Federal Food and Drug Administration in the control of products which cross State lines. Within the bureau is the section of Cannery Inspection which administers and enforces California laws governing the canning and packing of meat and nonacid fruit and vegetable products.

DIVISION OF LABORATORIES

The Division of Laboratories engages in six principal activities: diagnostic procedures involving bacteriologic and serologic examinations related to the control of communicable diseases; manufacture and distribution of biologic products and of one per cent silver nitrate outfits; analysis of food and drugs, required primarily for the enforcement of the laws relating to the purity of such products; analysis of water and sewage, for the pur-

pose of insuring the safety of water supplies; and enforcement of laws that require licensing of manufacturers and distributors of biologic products, that regulate clinical and public health laboratories, and that require the licensing of laboratory technicians.

The Virus Laboratory examines specimens for the diagnosis of virus diseases such as encephalitis and, through a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation, conducts extensive research to determine the cause, epidemiology, and methods of controlling influenza.

Other research in the cause and control of communicable diseases and in methods of improving public health laboratory procedures is also conducted.

DIVISION OF LOCAL HEALTH SERVICE

The Division of Local Health Service promotes the establishment and development of full-time local health departments staffed with qualified public health personnel and conducting programs meeting the recommended standards of public health practice. The relationship of the division to local health departments and officials is advisory, except insofar as the bureau administers State and Federal funds made available to local health departments. By utilizing the professional personnel from the other divisions of the department, the Division of Local Health Service serves to coördinate the varied programs of the department.

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(Note.—Articles relating to the history of the California State Department of Public Health have appeared in the following issues of CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN MEDICINE: Editorial "A National Department of Public Health," February, 1937, page 74; "Historical Notes on Public Health in California," article by Guy P. Jones, Sacramento, October, 1937, page 250; Article, "The Platform of the American Medical Association," December, 1939, page 394; Editorial "Federal Department of Health Officially Proposed by Thomas M. Logan, M.D., of California in 1871," January, 1940, page 2; "National Department of Health Proposed in 1871: By Thomas M. Logan, M.D., of California," article by Walter M. Dickie, M.D., San Francisco, January, 1940, page 6; "Benjamin Franklin Keene, Founder of the California Medical Association," an article by Louise F. Hays, Atlanta, Georgia, May, 1942, page 297; Editorial "Thomas M. Logan, M.D., Co-Founder of California Medical Association; His Efforts in 1872 to have United States Establish a National Department of Health, With Its Chief in the President's Cabinet," July, 1945, page 2; "Thomas M. Logan, M.D., Organizer of California State Board of Health and a Co-Founder of the California Medical Association," article by Guy P. Jones, San Francisco, July, 1945, page 6; "Early Public Health in California," an article by Guy P. Jones, San Francisco, December, 1945, page 275.†).

Jan Swammerdam (1637-1680).—The outstanding work of Swammerdam is contained in his history of insects published in 1669. By his studies he confirmed the theory of Harvey that there is no self-generation of small insects. Swammerdam was an expert in microscopic dissection, and is given recognition for being the first to see and describe the red blood corpuscles. Most of his life was devoted to intensive efforts in minute anatomy and embryology.—Warner's *Calendar of Medical History*.

† Addresses of Department of Public Health of the State of California follow:
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 Sacramento—631 J Street.
 Los Angeles—State Office Building, 217 West First Street; MADISON 1281.
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